THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) and (b) The total expenditure incurred on this account was of the order of Rs. 978 crores.

(c) 1165 personnel were killed and 3009 wounded in the operations in Sri Lanka. The families of the killed soldiers were given liberalised family pension and other pensionary benefits, as in the case of battle casualties, in accordance with the pensionary entitlements in force.

Compensation to porters killed during Kargil Conflict

1391. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the hired porters/volunteers to carry rations and ammunition for troops during the recent Kargil conflict were killed in the firing and thousands of porters have not been paid their wages;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any compensation has been given to next of the kin of the porters/volunteers who lost their lives in the conflict; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether the porters awaiting payment of their wages have been paid; if not, the steps teken by Government to clear their dues?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (d) during the Kargil confict, four porters were killed and two were injured as per the details given below :

(i) Shri Kamlesh Kumar S/o Banarsi Das of village Rehmbel, PO Garhi, Teh & Distt. Udhampur, J&K, was killed on 10th July 1999.

(ii) Shri Deler Singh S/o Shri Suram Singh of village Kolaha, Teh & Distt. Udhampur was killed on 1st August 1999.

(iii) Shri Paduman Singh S/o Shri Dantar Singh of village Kolaha, Teh & Distt. Udhampur was killed on 1st August 1999.

(iv) Shri Madan Singh S/o Shri Dhurub Singh of village Kolaha, Teh & Distt. Udhampur J&K was killed on 1st August 1999.

(v) Shri Krishan Lal S/o Shri Ganga Ram was injured.

(vi) Shri Ashwani Kumar S/o Shri Dass Ram was injured.

2. All the porters have been paid their wages for the period of their employment. Payment in respect of porters who had deserted has been deposited with the treasury.

3. A compensation of Rupees two lakhs for the killed and Rupees 80,000/- for the injured is being processed.

Shortfall of Air squadrons

1392. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem which appeared in the Asian Age dated 18th November, 1999 captioned 'IAF gives up Rs. 1500 crore due to Ministry's indecision';

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the action taken to wipe out the shortfall of air squadrons against the sanctioned strength of the Indian Air Force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) An amount only of Rs. 98.73 crore remained unutilised from the IAF Budget in the financial year 1998-99. The squadron strength of the IAF is adequate with the induction of new SU-30 aircraft.

Government are aware of the requirements of the IAF and are taking all necessary steps to meet them.

Development of High-Tech Surveillance Technology in Kargil

1393. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to enhanced threat perception, especially in Kargil sector, Government are thinking of deploying hi-tech satellite and aerial surveillance technology to detect enemy presence during winter-season;

(b) if so, whether the cost factor involving acquisition of surveillance technology and building the necessary infrastructure